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ABSTRACT

A 3-year project at Dominican College of San Rafael (California) supported by a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), is summarized. The project developed comprehensive integrated student development plan with four perspectives: (skills, stages, tasks, and styles) designed as a cornerstone of all academic and non-academic student-oriented programs at the college. Project activities and outcomes are discussed, noting the emphasis on incorporating student development values and goals into every part of the college and of student life on campus. The report describes the following: administrative re-organization and college goals; student development study groups; administrative student development study group; student development course for students; student assessment and institutional research; student development resource center; evaluation; and student development videotapes and dissemination. A project budget is presented. Appendix A is a copy of the International Studies Newsletter with information on the Dominican College campus. Appendix B contains the project evaluator's final evaluation. (SM)

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ED298838

AN INTEGRATED STUDENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
A MODEL FOR SMALL COLLEGES

Final Report to FIPSE

Dominican College
of San Rafael

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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HE 021 829

Grantee Organization:

Dominican College
1520 Grand Avenue
San Rafael, California 94901

Grant No.:

G008302732

Project Dates:

Starting Date: September 1, 1983
Ending Date: August 31, 1986
Number of months: 36

Project Director:

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Fund Program Officer:

Joanne Grason
Lelia Helms

Grant Award:

Year 1	$24,659
Year 2	23,009
Year 3	23,559
Total	$71,227

Bruce B. Willats

Bruce B. Willats, Project Director

Sister M. Aquinas Nimitz

Sister M. Aquinas Nimitz,
Academic Vice-President

PROJECT SUMMARY

This three year project uses a variety of components to develop a comprehensive integrated student development plan (with four perspectives: skills, stages, tasks, styles) as a cornerstone of all student oriented programs (academic and non-academic) at the College. The central ingredient is a series of ongoing faculty-student-staff Student Development Study Groups which: try to integrate student development theory; apply theory to practice in teaching, learning, and administration; are involved in ongoing developmentally oriented student assessment; and carry out appropriate program and policy planning informed by this study.

NARRATIVE

Project Activities and Outcomes

Introduction

This narrative will recapitulate what we have attempted and achieved as a program over the past year (9/1/85 - 8/31/86, the third year of the grant), and what the College has achieved in part as a result of this program, around issues of student development.

The thrust of this project has been, from the beginning, to stimulate and support the incorporation of student development values and goals into every part of the College and of student life on campus. The goal was to reinforce Dominican's historic concern for the development (intellectual, social, professional, physical, and moral) of each of its students not only through the classroom and other curricular activities, but also through such co-curriculum components as dormatory life, athletic activities, dealing with matters of finance and registration, and so forth. This project has been successful in supporting and stimulating (like leaven) the College's initiatives in student development in large measure because the College was already moving to extend its concern for student development even further into every aspect of campus and student life. The project was both a product of a trend already moving on campus, and a stimulus to the focussing and expansion of that trend throughout the campus.

Therefore the impact of this project has turned out to be greater than we originally hoped. There are three reasons for this. First, as mentioned above, the College is at a point in its history when it is both ready and willing to incorporate student development as a central element, and in a clearly articulated form, into its goals and purposes, into its short and long range planning, and into its day to day activities. The FIPSE project helped develop this readiness on the part of the College.

Second, we have very competent and committed people working at the heart of this project, people who are open and flexible and who care (really care) about students and teaching and learning. These people are also at the center of the College's power structures and are able to influence important policy decisions.

Third, the project was designed with enough flexibility (and FIPSE has supported the flexibility for which we are grateful) to allow it to be revised as

needed and to allow the leadership of the College (faculty and administrators) to explore new areas of student development as appropriate.

Administrative Re-organization and College Goals.

One far reaching and important outcome is the change which has occurred in the College's articulation of goals and purposes and the resulting change in administrative structure. This change continues to have a profound impact through the College at every level.

First, the President of the College has made student intellectual development a keystone in the College's purpose and plan. It is a central goal in her administrative policy, and continues to be a central factor in the design and implementation of both academic and student services programs.

Second, this emphasis found concrete expression in the creation of the new staff position of "Assistant Academic Dean for Faculty, Curriculum and Student Development" now filled by a very competent person who is well trained and experienced in student development theory and practice.

Third, the Student Services Office was completely re-organized to ensure that it addresses student development issues squarely and effectively. The job descriptions for both the Dean of Students and the Assistant Dean of Students were revised with a strong emphasis on competence in student development theory and practice, and highly qualified people were found to carry out that mandate.

Finally, all the five members of the Council of Deans are actively involved in the study of student intellectual development theory and its application and they are incorporating it into their deliberations in appropriate ways.

Student Development Study Groups.

(1) In the first year of the project we had two student development study groups. One, composed of students and faculty in the natural sciences, continued for two years and ended a year ago. The second, composed of students and faculty in the Global Studies program, continued its activities for three years, and will be described below.

In the second year of the project we started three more student development study groups. One, with faculty and students from Nursing, continued for just one year. A second, concerned primarily with writing-across-the-curriculum, continued throughout the year just past and will continue its work next year (1986-87). It will be described below also. A third, the Administrative Student Development Study Group, is still going strong and shows every sign of a long life

after the end of the grant. It will be described in a separate section.

(2) The Study group involving faculty and students from the Global Studies program spent the second year researching and designing an extended simulation created specifically to promote intellectual development in students in Global Studies. Called the "Burmese Bruhaha," this simulation is about a village in Burma which has been offered a $100,000 grant from the World Bank to redirect its energy and resources from the production of opium (its chief industry) to a more acceptable economic activity. A series of scenarios was developed, with a variety of characters (each with both positive and negative valences) played by students and faculty, and with some intervening events (monsoons, etc.) to add realism. The task of the village is to fashion a proposal to send to the World Bank while, at the same time, being true to the values and identity of the village and the people in it. This simulation includes all the necessary elements of intellectual development together with such additional elements as values clarification, empathy for a foreign culture, negotiation and compromise, and an understanding of the impact of external funding on existing institutions and their integrity.

The group ran this simulation as a one-unit segment of a three-unit Pacific Basin course last Spring semester. The simulation had been designed during the prior two semesters by four faculty members (from the Biology, Political Science, Business, and Religious Studies departments to include a rich cross-disciplinary perspective) using student intellectual development theory as a basis. The simulation itself extended over a period of five weeks, with twenty-six students, four college staff personnel, and five faculty members meeting for two hours one night each week. The simulation was judged to be a marked success. It gave students a very different learning experience than they usually have in college and engaged them in a variety of developmental activities. They were actively engaged in problem solving in a very real sense. They had to not only deal with, but also understand and function in, another culture. Each student had to identify with a particular character within the simulation (a buffalo herder, an opium grower, a world bank official, a Buddhist monk, etc.) and act out that person's role as fully and as consistently as possible. There was a real community problem to resolve, and each student could experience first hand the conflicts inherent in society as well as examine and analyse them from the point of view of various academic disciplines. The students learned how difficult life is for third world villages, and about the conflicts they face when torn between Western materialism and their own traditional religious values. They learned about frustration,

about how debilitating ignorance can be, and about how it feels when the ordinary mechanisms of social governance and social change don't work.

The "Burmese Bruhaha" was described in a two-page article in the June/July 1986 issue of International Studies Newsletter published by the International Studies Association (see Appendix A).

(3) The writing-across-the-curriculum study group was composed of staff from the College Skills Center and faculty from the English Writing Program, and worked during the year designing a writing-across-the-curriculum plan for the whole college, using principles, theories, and practices created to address student intellectual developmental needs. The goal of this group has been to help our faculty relate the development of writing skills to other issues of student intellectual development, and to assist faculty in all fields to help our students become better writers and better thinkers.

The group spent the Fall surveying the faculty and studying developmental issues, and the Spring putting together the training program for the Summer. In the Summer, 12 pairs of faculty were selected. One of each pair was teaching in the developmentally oriented writing program, teaching students with writing problems (English A). The other of each pair was in a content oriented class designed to meet the College's general education requirements. These pairs were to attend an all day writing-across-the-curriculum work shop in June, work together in course design during July, and attend a second all day work shop in August. Their two courses would thus be coordinated, so that the assignments given in the content oriented general education course would also be the writing assignments used in the writing class. Each content course thus had an adjunct writing course related to it.

The program was only partially successful. The College was going through a variety of changes in curriculum (including changes in the general education requirements) and in the writing faculty, as well as changes in the procedure for registering students for classes. It was difficult to coordinate the adjunct teams. Several teams, however, were successful. One team consisted of a course in Religious Studies teamed with a basic writing course. The writing teacher attended all the Religious Studies classes and did all the assignments. Her writing course was made up exclusively of students from the Religious Studies course. In her class they worked on their Religious Studies papers. In addition, she helped the Religious Studies professor redesign his writing assignments for his course, and helped him find more effective ways to read and respond to the papers that

his students turned in. When he assigned a paper, he also guided the students through some paper writing stimulation exercises in class (exercises suggested by the writing teacher) to help students get ideas on the assignment and get through the first block to writing. He used student led paper conferences in class after the first draft of a paper, with both student and faculty critique. (The writing teacher also had her papers critiqued in class.) There were unlimited opportunities to rewrite for those students who felt they could benefit and improve their work. And, of course, as the class critiqued writing so also thinking was critiqued. It was most exciting for the faculty and for the students.

Administrative Student Development Study Group.

The Administrative Student Development Study Group is composed of key administrators and faculty members who are actively working on several fronts to integrate student development concerns and values throughout the College. It has met for two hours every two weeks during the school year for the past two years. It is convened by the Academic Dean (who is also the Vice-President of the College). Other members are: the Assistant Academic Dean for Faculty, Curriculum, and Student Development; the Dean for Student Services; the Assistant Dean for Student Services; and the Dean of Admissions. (These five people also comprise the Council of Deans, a central decision making and coordinating body at the College.) In addition, there were six other members: the Director of the College Skills Center (and the convener of Writing-Across-the-Curriculum Study Group); a Professor in Psychology and specialist in developmental theory; the Director of the FIPSE funded Student Development Program; and three faculty members of the General Education Board (Director of the Global Studies Program, Director of the Humanities Program, and past chairperson of the Curriculum Committee).

Last year (the second year of the grant), this group identified seven periods in the life of our students, beginning at the summer after the Junior year in high school and extending into alumni and retirement age. These seven periods are: (1) Decision regarding college attendance; (2) Application, admission and choice of college; (3) Entry and orientation to college; (4) Attendance at college; (5) Exit and commencement from college; (6) Early alumni status; (7) Later adulthood.

The College hopes to address each of these periods in the life of the learner. Transitions between these periods are "teachable moments" when the College can be of special value to learners, and we hope to address those transition periods with special programs.

Last year this group revised the week-long orientation programs for new students in line with student development theory and practice. That work continued in the year just past with a review of the pilot orientation program of the prior year, appropriate revisions, and new design put into place for the coming Fall semester, including substantial changes in administrative function and responsibility, the physical location of registration and Freshman advising. The group also briefly reviewed our exiting procedure last year, for both graduating seniors and students who transfer out of the College, in terms of 12 levels of exit program, with increasingly comprehensive programs at each level.

Probably the most important work of the group, over the last two years, has been in providing a supportive forum for the discussion of issues critical to the College in an informal setting dedicated to frank sharing about student and faculty/staff development. (This benefit was anticipated as one of the gains for the Administrator's study group, but its high value and importance were not anticipated in the original proposal.) The group has provided both challenge and support for administrators as they wrestle with their areas of responsibility and try to make them more responsive to student development and faculty/staff development needs.

The group seems to serve as a kind of off-the-record place where ideas and concerns can be freely and safely aired, and where help and support can be asked for and received. Here are some quotes from last year.

"All of us have made some very practical changes in the way we do things here at the College as the result of being in this group. I've changed one thing after another in my work. I just can't bear to do something that isn't developmental any more!"

"I need to borrow ideas from other people about how to do my job so it supports student development more fully. This is a place in which I can build on ideas from everyone in the group."

"The result [of putting student developmental ideas into practice] has been better student retention and the saving of money."

"This group is actually like a continuing seminar for administrators, where people feed each other ideas [about how to make the College more developmentally sensitive]. There is a kind of 'connectedness;' this is a place for 'connectedness.'"

"We are the grass roots development group at Dominican."

These quotes from key administrators illustrate the function of the group last year in the ongoing dialogue about the deepest issues of concern

to the College regarding student and faculty/staff development.

In the course of the current year, the Administrative Student Development Study Group has discussed a variety of issues and made changes designed to address the more important problems on campus. But more importantly, the group has been carefully discussing (and adding three additional key faculty members into that discussion) a radical and far-reaching new plan which would completely revise our thinking about curriculum, students, and teaching while restructuring our academic administrative system and addressing the glaring problems of duplication and inequity in the non-teaching loads of faculty.

This new model reflects several assumptions, among them these four:

1. We have added programs but not students to the College, so we are thinning out too few students among too many programs.
2. We need to address the needs of the students we serve, i.e. especially those "wounded" by the academic system, those not prepared for high level college work, or underachievers.
3. We have a plethera of release time arrangements and a lot of duplication of effort or unnecessary administrative posts. In addition, it is difficult to cut programs or courses because each interest group argues for its own program.
4. Our curriclum should be fully developmental.

In this new model, the academic administrative system would be restructured into five boards, each board having a certain jurisdiction.

1. A freshman year board.
2. A humanities and/or general education board.
3. A major fields board.
4. A senior year board.
5. A co-curricular board, or a board dealing with non-academic competencies or values.

Thus, we would be radically changing the departmental system which now prevails at the College. Each of the four academic boards would have a certain number of units to allocate, and decisions of allocation would be made through negotiation among board members rather than each special interest pleading with the Dean for special allocations. We would also compute any release time for the board work on a brand new basis, arguing for each unit of released time on its merit rather than automatically giving it for certain categories ("zero-based release time"). This model is seen as a radical solution at a time for aggressive thinking, a solution which focusses again on student developmental needs at the core of the College's committment.

A working group was selected to continue work on the new model over the summer and to facilitate continued progress in the Fall after the FIPSE grant is over. The Freshman Orientation work group also continued its work over the summer. The Administrative Student Development Study Group will continue next year without

FIPSE help, a testimony to the effectiveness of the grant in furthering the goals of the College and to the importance of the group in the ongoing life of the College. The formation of this group, and the administrative changes outlined on page 2 (above) are the two most significant outcomes and long-term benefits of the FIPSE grant to the College; their benefit may be felt on this campus for years to come. Because of these two activities, and because of the work of the other student development study groups, the faculty has quietly become sensitive to student developmental issues, knowledgeable about student developmental theories, and active in revising their classes, courses, and curricula along student development lines.

Student Development Course for Students.

A new course designed to teach student development theory to students and to help them take charge of their own learning was pilot tested this past year. A five week seminar with eight students surveyed and applied the theories David Kolb (learning styles, the learning cycle), Arthur Chickering (seven vectors or student tasks), Grash-Reichmann (modes of student behavior in the classroom), and support and challenge. Students took instruments, did homework, and discussed their findings in terms of their own learning and their own college goals. Each student was asked to "re-design" a course he or she was taking in terms of these theories. The last week the entire class "re-designed" the whole college from a developmental point of view. Students not only learned about themselves as learners, they also learned that there are many ways to achieve ones goals and that they can be in charge of their own experience as learners. This same course will be offered to two groups of students (12 in each class) this coming Fall.

Student Assessment and Institutional Research.

Research related to this project is of two kinds. First, we are doing longitudinal studies of each class at the College to measure the degree of developmental change over the four years. Second, we are doing studies of the educational environment at the College, and especially of the discrepancy between what students want and what they think they have at the College. We hope to relate both these studies, directly and indirectly, to the FIPSE program. From this we should be able to get measurable outcomes and make inferences about the relationship of the program to the outcomes.

Longitudinal studies are being carried out on each class at the College. We currently have four cohorts. We assessed the Sophomore class in the

Spring of 1983 (cohort 1, 46% of the class), and were able to assess a few of them again as Seniors (1985) just before they graduated. We assessed the Freshman class in the Fall of 1983 (cohort 2, 46%) and will assess them again as Seniors in 1987. We assessed the Freshman class in the Fall of 1984 (cohort 3, 52%), and the Freshman class in the Fall of 1985 (cohort 4, 79%), and will assess them each again later. We expect to assess each Freshman class shortly after it enters in the Fall, and to continue the longitudinal study of each class after the grant is over.

We are assessing each student for level of development in four areas: tasks, skills, stages, and styles. We are using two or three methods to assess each area so as to address students with different media preferences or stimuli-response modes. Therefore, we are using: (1) a 30 - 45 minute interview, for an auditory-oral mode; (2) four standardized instruments, for a printed-writing mode; and (3) a paper and pencil short answer questionnaire, using visual (film) and printed stimuli and calling for written responses.

The interview has some Perry type questions to assess Perry levels of intellectual development. There are also some questions which get at the seven Chickering vectors to assess the degree to which each of the Chickering tasks is of central concern for each student. The transcipts are being analyzed to determine the level of certain skills, and we hope to be able to make some inferences regarding concrete and formal operations (Piaget) and the learning styles of each student.

The four standardized instruments address the areas from another point of view. The Kolb Learning Style Inventory assesses the dominant style of learning. The Student Development Task Inventory assesses the student in relation to the Chickering tasks. The Grey-Wheelwright Jungian Type Survey or the Myers-Briggs Psychological Type Indicator assess Jungian types and correlate with Kolb.

The Educational Environment Scale (EES) is an omnibus instrument which measures attitudes and perceptions around issues of teaching, learning, and administrative policy. It measures the perceptions of people as to how things really are at the College and how people wish things would be. Thus, the EES measures perceptions of the real and of the ideal, and the discrepancies between the two. In this way, it can infer levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction around certain issues for each cohort, and changes in both attitude and level of satisfaction over time.

The EES gets at a variety of issues. For example, students tend to prefer content oriented, student oriented, or interaction oriented types of classes.

(These preferences tend to correlate with Perry stages.) The EES shows how these preferences change in a cohort over the four years of College. The EES also measures student attitudes toward autocratic, democratic, and laissaz faire governance styles, the level of student satisfaction regarding student-faculty, student-administration, and student-student interactions, and the degree to which students think that the College has addressed each of 13 different student learning outcomes.

Thus, the EES assesses not only what the students prefer (or say they prefer), but also to what degree they think the College is responding to those preferences. We are watching to see (a) in what ways student preferences change in the four years, (b) in what ways their perceptions of reality change in the four years, and (c) how the discrepancy between the two (their level of satisfaction) changes in four years. (These may then be correlated to their direct or indirect involvement in the FIPSE funded student development program, in a manner to be described below.)

Incidentally, the EES measures all these attitudes for faculty and administrators as well as students, and we are gathering rich and useful information throughout the College on perceptions and attitudes regarding the educational and the organizational climate at this institution. This is a part of the College's ongoing institutional research.

The last instrument is a paper and pencil short-answer questionnaire. Students are asked to view an 8-minute film about the relativity of "right" and "wrong" and respond to it. Then they read a parable about responsibility and agency and respond to it. Then they compare the film and the parable. These two questions yield data on Perry stages, on Chickering tasks, and on skills. Next, students do two Piaget type puzzles which yield data on intellectual stages. (Copies of each of the instruments mentioned above may be found in the second year semi-annual report submitted in February, 1985.)

Using this array of interviews, standardized instruments, and short answers (tapping oral, visual, and reading and writing modes) we hope to be able to make inferences regarding significant changes in cohorts.

But we think the data will be still richer. We hope to be able to make inferences as to how effective the FIPSE funded student development program has been in influencing the rate of student development at the College. In Part III of the EES, each student indicates his or her level of affiliation ("acquaintance") with each of fifty faculty members at the College. Using two other measures (a five-point self-rating scale, and a five-point rating scale by a panel) we

will be able to determine the level of involvement of each faculty member in the student development program over the three year period. (Faculty will be rated as more involved if they have been in a year-long study group, for example, and less involved if they haven't.) We can then measure the rate of change in students who have been affiliated with faculty who have been highly involved in the program, and compare it to the rate of change of students who have been affiliated with faculty who have been less involved in the program. While we will not be able to ascribe causality, we can look for correlations (or the lack of correlations) and, by coupling this with other kinds of evidence, suggest some inferences.

One other anticipated outcome is worth mentioning. We hope to use the data from the longitudinal studies as part of the basis for a series of four exiting seminars for Seniors. In the first seminar, Seniors will be able to compare their first year interview with their recent interview three years later. They will be given copies of transcripts, and we will discuss with them any changes they see (how they have developed in three years), and what this might mean (for career graduate study, etc.) as they plan their futures. In the second seminar, we will help them compare their early and recent Kolb scores so that they might understand what their dominant learning styles are and what that means. In the third seminar, we will look at the early and recent scores on the Chickering tasks, and in the fourth seminar, the Jungian typologies. We hope graduating Seniors will develop a more comprehensive picture of themselves as learners at Dominican, and prepare themselves for ongoing learning after college.

Student Development Resource Center.

Supporting all of these activities is the Student Development Resource Center which is buying books, journals, audio-visual materials, micro-fiche, and other materials to assist study groups, individual faculty, and task force members in their work. The Center (the first such center on this campus) is the result of a collaboration between the Student Services Office and the Office of the Academic Dean, and has made significant contributions to the work of this project, to teaching effectiveness and curriculum development, and to career and graduate studies counseling at the College.

Evaluation.

Dr. Gene Rice, the project evaluator, has been involved with the project from its inception. Dr. Rice's ten-page evaluation report will be found as Appendix B.

Student Development Video-Tapes and Dissemination

During the three year project, dissemination took place through a variety of settings, usually using the student development video-tapes. Several video-tapes were made of students responding to a "Perry-type" interview, and in some cases the developmental stage of each student became quite apparent. The best of these interviews were put together into one video-tape, which was used in student development training sessions on other campuses and at the FIPSE annual conference. We gave workshops at POD conferences (Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education) and at two international conferences sponsored by the Ministry of Education for the Province of British Columbia in Canada, and also for the FIPSE sponsored eight-school consortium for the implementation of student development programs in the central Ohio region (Larry Grimes, program director). The tape has also been used locally for faculty training in identifying stages of student development and teaching to students at different levels of development.

The second major outcome by way of dissemination is the writing of a book by five of the persons involved in the FIPSE funded project: Dr. William Bergquist, President of the Professional School of Psychology in San Francisco; Dr. Joanne Kurfiss, in the office of faculty development and teaching effectiveness at the University of Delaware; Dr. Hattie Bishop, formerly Asst. Academic Dean at Dominican College, now in the Office of Institutional Research at Cosumnes River College in Sacramento, California; Dr. Robert Shukraft, Professor of Psychology at Dominican College; Dr. Bruce Willats, formerly Asst. Professor of Psychology and Religious Studies and Director of the FIPSE-funded Student Development program, and of a very large Faculty Development program at Dominican College, now in the private sector. The book, tentatively entitled, Colleges and Students Growing Together; Theory and Practice in Dialogue, approaches student development from the point of view of Argyris and Schon's notion of the reflective practitioner and theory in practice, and looks at student development in the context of the whole system. It uses a case study of a hypothetical college, and addresses such practical problems as student passivity, faculty vitality, academic dishonesty, curriculum, institutional mission statements, and traditional college values, seeking to reframe and redefine the problem of student development and offer suggestions as to why recent student development research has not borne as much fruit as it might on small campuses. We have 350 Pages of draft material drawn from

our experience in this FIPSE funded project and from our professional experience as a whole, and are discussing the book with a leading publisher of books in higher education. The prospects are promising.

FUNDFOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

THIRD YEAR - 1985 - 1986

DATE Sept. 1, 1986

DIRECT COSTS		BUDGET	ALLOCATED	REMAINING
3981	Salaries and Wages	$10,925	$10,925	$ - 0 -
3982	College Overhead	874	874	- 0 -
3983-1	Student Development Presenters	1,100	1,100	- 0 -
3983-2	Program consultative Evaluation	1,200	1,200	- 0 -
3984	Travel, conferences, Workshops	1,800	1,800	- 0 -
3985-1	Office supplies, xeroxing, Printing	900	900	- 0 -
3986	Video-tape equipment	850	850	- 0 -
3987-1	Student Development Study Group Stipend, faculty	2,800	2.800	- 0 -
3987-2	Student Development Study Group: books and resources	1,260	1,260	- 0 -
3987-3	Student Assessment costs	1,200	1,200	- 0 -
3985-2	Resource Center	650	650	- 0 -
		$ 23,559	$23,559	$ - 0 -

APPENDIX A

International Studies
NEWSLETTER

June/July, 1986 Volume 13, Number 5

The Lure of Pacific Basin Studies

by: Rose Murphy
Dominican College

"The Burmese Brouhaha" is not a new Asian rock group. But it was the most talked-about class on the Dominican College campus (San Rafael, CA) during the spring, 1986, semester. The popularity of this class — which dealt with the problems of modernization in a Burmese village — is just one of many signs that Asian studies are attracting more and more students.

One-third of Dominican's student body (of approximately 500) enrolled in eight Pacific Basin-related courses, including "The Burmese Brouhaha," during the spring, 1986, semester. In fall, 1982, 25 percent of the student body chose this area of study; by spring, 1986, the figure had increased to 32 percent. And because of an increasing need for professional, more specialized Asian study at the graduate level, Dominican is preparing to launch a new masters program this fall — in International Economic and Political Assessment in the Pacific Basin.

"What's happening at Dominican reflects a growing American awareness of a significant part of the world," says Francoise Lepage, Director of the College's international studies program and a leading architect of the new focus on Pacific Basin studies.

Lepage explains both the attraction of Asian studies and Dominican's emphasis on this area: "Economies of many Asian countries are growing twice as fast as Western economies. Trade with several of these nations is a significant fact of life for the United States. I'm convinced our students must prepare for the new challenges posed by the potential of this region . . . particularly in view of our place in the San Francisco Bay Area, the very hub of American-Pacific economic activity."

"Dominican's concentration on Asian studies actually began at the undergraduate level in 1982," Lepage says. Over the last four years, several Dominican departments and programs have worked together in planning Pacific Basin curriculum which help prepare students for these new challenges and which also provide insights into Asian cultures.

"The Burmese Brouhaha" is a good example of that planning and of the excitement generated by a new area of exploration. Structured as a game, or simulation, "The Burmese Brouhaha" casts students in the role of villagers who had to convert their profitable opium crop to a more socially acceptable industry in order to obtain a World Bank loan. This scenario created an innovative way to absorb the culture and economic realities of a Pacific Basin country.

"The Burmese Brouhaha" was part of an interdisciplinary "colloquium" — meaning a series of courses centered around a main theme, in this case "Human Consequences of Modernization in the Pacific Basin." Other courses in the colloquium approached the subject from different disciplines, such as "Politics in the Pacific Basin" and "Ecology of the Pacific Basin."

Lepage believes that this interdisciplinary treatment provides "a richness and a strength" not usually found in the international studies programs of larger institutions. There, such a study is normally confined to one department and one viewpoint. But Dominican's Pacific Basin faculty is drawn from business administration, science, the humanities and history, as well as political science. "Small really is beautiful," Lepage says. "Interdisciplinary learning can truly happen at an intimate liberal arts college."

Beginning in the fall, 1986, Japanese and Chinese language study will be offered at Dominican, Lepage adds, "to help students reach out beyond technical skills into communication that shows caring." Building on the base of this strong undergraduate program, Dominican now adds the Pacific Basin masters program in International Economic and Political Assessment. "It draws from the liberal arts, economics, international finance and politics," Lepage explains. "It is designed to prepare graduate students for professional roles in international corporations, government and non-profit organizations. We want to assist in the development of people who will be both highly competent and culturally sensitive. People who have been accepted to date in the new program will definitely enrich it," Lepage believes. "There is a lawyer, a scientist with two other master degrees, a former Coast Guard captain, and a German linguist from Hong Kong. The average age of our applicants is 36; their average length of work experience is eight years." Lepage emphasizes that Dominican now brings Pacific Basin education to students at all levels — from kindergarten to graduate school. The K-12 component comes from Dominican's affiliation with Global Education Marin (GEM), a consortium of educational institutions which assist teachers in giving children an appreciation of other cultures and an insight into the interdependence of nations. Dominican is one of these supporting institutions and houses the GEM Resource Center on its campus. This year, GEM is offering teacher workshops on Japan and other Pacific Basin countries. At all levels of Pacific Basin study, Lepage notes, many good things are happening which support and strengthen the academic programs. During the 1986 spring semester, Zhou Qiji, President of the Beijing Normal College of Foreign Languages in China, was scholar-in-residence for a week. He spoke in several classes and addressed the community on "Higher Education in the People's Republic of China." His visit represents the second time a Chinese scholar has come to the campus in recent years. During the 1984-85 year, Wu Xiao Xin, also of the Beijing Normal College, taught Chinese at the College. He will return during the 1986-87 academic year — again to teach Chinese and give his students a better understanding of modern China. Other experts who spoke at Dominican last Spring are Benjamin Cate, Special Assistant to the publisher of *Time* magazine and a Pacific Basin specialist, and Theodore H. Moran of Georgetown University, well known for his work with multi-national corporations.

The Japan Foundation of New York has granted the College a $3,500 collection of books on Japanese politics, economy and culture. This gift, which should be in the Dominican College library by fall, represents "a significant collection for a liberal arts college of our size," according to Lepage.

Corporate leaders, scholars, journalists, social scientists, and students came together for a spring, 1985 symposium — a valuable day-long exchange of ideas on US trade relations with Pacific Basin countries. Participants included Harry Harding, Senior Fellow with the Brookings Institution; Orville Schell, noted researcher and author of *The New China and the Pacific Basin Future;* Richard King, international business consultant; William F. Miller, President, SRI International; Chalmers Johnson and Walter Haas. Another symposium, which will benefit the community as well as students, is being planned for spring, 1987.

Considering the academic programs and all the support projects connected to it, Dominican's commitment to the Pacific Basin is an ambitious enterprise, Lepage admits. And it has taken an "angel" to bring it to reality. The visiting scholars and programs such as last year's Symposium happen because of the J. Harold Dollar Chair, a program funded by an annual gift to the College from Mrs. J. Harold Dollar, a Dominican alumna and a firm supporter of Pacific Basin studies.

All of the funding, the planning and the talent demanded by a comprehensive Pacific Basin program are directed toward one goal, Lepage says — that of "sending graduates who are multi-dimensional out into the real world."

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FINAL EVALUATION

"AN INTEGRATED STUDENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM: A MODEL FOR SMALL COLLEGES"

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The "First Year Evaluation" of the FIPSE grant began by characterizing Dominican's student development project as "especially promising." Conceptually, the proposal outlining the project was impressive. In comparison with most small colleges in America, Dominican has an exceptionally sophisticated faculty and administration. Much was expected from the FIPSE-funded project; much was gained.

Although the student development program was by most measures a marked success, the final evaluation was clouded by the climate of crisis that permeated the institution at the end of the grant period--August 1986. The Fall Term opened with the demand for faculty and program retrenchment, the resignation of the President, and the need to cope with the problems created by the termination of a multi-million dollar grant from the San Francisco Foundation (the Buck grant). As one administrator put it: "the College has shifted into a survival mode and the needs of survival are of necessity being given priority."

The current crisis should not be allowed to obscure the significance of the student development program. The commitment to student development is so firmly entrenched that it promises to inform the hard choices being made around retrenchment and could contribute to making the College, in the long run,

a better institution. Student development in many colleges is "a frill," an "add-on" to be eliminated in time of financial pressure. The strength of Dominican's commitment to student development will now be tested. There is reason to believe that given the College's history and the impact of the FIPSE grant the development of the student will continue to be a the heart of Dominican's identity and mission.

During the evaluation interviews, several faculty members and administrators pointed out that Dominican had always taken the development of the student seriously and that the significance of the grant was to provide a language and a "coherent framework" within which to address developmental issues. Others argued that the major contribution of the FIPSE project was to establish a "developmental environment" in the College. Before getting into the assessment of the various components of the project, a word needs to be said about the evaluation process.

Evaluation Process. This final evaluation builds on extensive interviews, document reviews, and participant observations made while attending a number of the activities associated with the grant. The evaluator is also a member of the evaluation team associated with the large San Francisco Foundation grant and as a consequence knows the College well. This summative evaluation covers the full three-year period of the FIPSE grant. It assumes that the reader has access to the project director's final report and will describe only those activities that are relevant to the evaluation.

Academic Culture and Organizational Structure. The first goal of the FIPSE project was to influence the basic culture of the College--to make the concern for student development the hallmark of Dominican. During the first year of the grant, President Barbara Bundy placed student development at the top of the College's agenda. She was exceptionally articulate and drew heavily on the work of William Perry and Lee Knefelkamp in stressing the importance of listening carefully to the student voice and urging the College to make student development theory the common language of the institution. The Dean of the College (now Academic Vice President) became deeply involved in a number of the grant's activities and was clearly committed to a developmental approach to student learning. She became exceptionally well-informed and supported the basic purposes of the grant with enthusiasm. If rhetoric and commitment were enough, the program would have been enormously successful. Influencing the culture of an institution, however, takes both time and organizational stability.

There is widespread agreement that the FIPSE grant had its largest and most enduring impact on the organizational structure of the College. During the period of the grant and in conjunction with its primary thrust, the College went through a major administrative reorganization. The Student Services Office was thoroughly restructured and given a more central role in the life of the College. A new Dean and Assistant Dean for Student Services were appointed and the Office was formally linked more

directly to the academic sector of the institution. In addition, a permanent full-time position of "Assistant Academic Dean for Faculty, Curriculum, and Student Development" was appointed. This administrative reorganization signaled clearly that student development was to be given high priority in the College and that the barriers that usually exist between student services and the academic life of the institution were to be eliminated.

Dominican has built the commitment to student development into the very structure of the institution. This is a significant accomplishment that should have a lasting impact on the lives of students now on campus and, if given sufficient attention, has the potential for being a major resource for recruitment and institutional development.

Although the establishment of the position of Assistant Academic Dean was well-intended and the present occupant is highly qualified, serious adjustment is needed there.

As promising as this administrative reorganization was, a number of faculty viewed it with suspicion. Several expressed concern about what was referred to as "institutional puffery" (see First Year Evaluation). This expression of anxiety on the part of faculty when any administrative addition is made is not unusual. In retrospect, however,it is evident that appropriate questions were being asked about the rapidity of change, the lack of continuity, and the need for more careful financial planning.

Student Development Study Groups. The original proposal identifies the Student Development Study Groups as the project's

primary method of implementation. This proved to be an enormously successful strategy; a major staff and faculty development effort. Several interviewed expressed the view that this aspect of the FIPSE project had a larger impact on faculty development than anything funded under the San Francisco Foundation grant.

The four Student Development Study Groups (described at length in the project director's reports) varied in their relative success. The natural sciences group and the one focusing on what is called "Global Studies" were most effective. Faculty and students became impressively conversant with the major theories of student development and moved toward direct application in the classroom and to the programs of the College. Outside consultants were used and made lasting contributions. The work of Dr. Mildred Henry was particularly helpful. She not only provided resource materials of high quality and effective critique of group process, but visited individual faculty member's classrooms, sharing her observations with the faculty member and discussing ways of incorporating some of the new insights from developmental theory into classroom practice.

The Student Development Study Groups made a number of lasting contributions. The science curriculum was changed in several ways and new procedures were established (e.g., a senior thesis). A new priority was placed on involving students in research with faculty. The group concerned with writing-across-the-curriculum grappled with a critical learning issue within the

life of the College to which faculty will need to continually attend. During the first year, the social science/humanities group developed a normative statement of the chief characteristics of the "Better Teacher" and "Better Student" in the Dominican context. Later in the project, members of this same group created a very imaginative simulation designed specifically to promote intellectual development in students in the Global Studies program. The "Burmese Bruhaha," as the simulation was called, generated a great deal of interest in alternative ways of teaching and learning in the College and was published in an international studies publication.

More might have been done to disseminate what was learned in the study groups to the faculty and students throughout the rest of the College. The direct experience of those involved, however, was very rich and cannot help but have a "ripple effect" on others in the College over the next several years. Dominican has a critical mass of faculty who know student development theory well and have experienced success in applying it in their own teaching and in program development.

Administrative Student Development Study Group. The original proposal for this project lamented the diversity of theories in the field of student development and promised to work toward the integration of the four dominant perspectives--states, skills, styles, and tasks. During the second year of the grant, the Administrative Student Development Study Group was

formed to grapple with this theoretical task and take on the responsibility of hammering out an action plan for the College. This study group met frequently and with regularity. It was composed of the key administrators from both the academic and student service sectors of the College as well as faculty and student leaders. The consultant, William Bergquist, also met with the group.

The Administrative Student Development Study Group was both powerful and well-informed. Its primary contribution, however, was its educational function. It provided administrators, faculty and students with a safe environment and a common language to use in discussing and planning for the future of the College. The formation of the group was clearly the most important aspect of the FIPSE grant.

Those participating on the group found the discussions to be unusually open and frank. The student development theme provided focus and direction. An early outcome that proved to be especially beneficial was the revision of the orientation program for new students in line with student development theory and practice. Critical and sensitive issues having to do with curricular innovation, the underprepared students, and administrative staffing were addressed. A proposal for fundamentally restructuring the academic programs of the College was presented and agreed upon. The Administrative Student Development Study Group will continue beyond the grant, perhaps the best testimony to its usefulness.

Other Components of the Program. The FIPSE project had a number of additional components; these have been faithfully reported on by the director of the grant. Dominican has initiated a variety of student assessment studies that were thoroughly integrated into the FIPSE project. Much of this work is especially imaginative and creative. Its usefulness will be most apparent, however, long after the project has run its course. There is little hard evidence in the literature on student development that this kind of emphasis makes a difference over the long haul. If Dominican can document its achievements, an important contribution will have been made. Experience has been gained in institutional research, but systematic follow-up is required. The College needs to decide whether the fruits of a longitudinal study are worth the investment in the time and resources required.

Two other components of the project can be sustained with only modest investment. The first is the student development course, and the second is the student development resource center. These components will not perpetuate themselves and need to be attended to if the good work of the FIPSE project is to be built upon.

Conclusions. Through the FIPSE project, Dominican has demonstrated the power of a student development orientation. A thorough commitment to student development can provide institutional purpose, draw faculty and staff together around an integrating theme, and have a significant educational impact on

the lives of students. Student development could become a powerful focus not only in program development, but in marketing the College to prospective students and donors alike. After the first year of the grant there was evidence that Dominican was moving in this direction. The dramatic success of most of the components of the project underscored this impression. The new orientation program, the new appointments in the student services division, and the work of the study groups demonstrated how important student development was to the College. The students themselves see this orientation as the strength of the College.

Throughout the evaluation process, questions have been raised about whether the College itself is developmentally oriented. Are faculty and staff approached developmentally--is there a developmental environment that permeates the life of the College? Can you have an effective emphasis on student development without this kind of ethos? One thing has become clear through the life of the project, development takes <u>time</u>. Rapidly changing environments are not developmental unless managed with great care. Quick turnover in student populations and programs do not allow time for the developmental process. Feedback and adjustment are required; significant potential and gains are not immediately evident.

Institutions that are forced to live close to the margin (in terms of financial viability and student enrollments) frequently cannot provide the time required for a significant innovation to come to full bloom and flourish. The maturation process in developmental endeavors is attenuated--cut short.

In the climate of crisis that confronts the College at present the question needs to be raised: Are the student development agenda and the survival agenda compatible? If the student development commitment is to be sustained, it will require hard choices and a willingness to stick with the commitment, placing it at the heart of the institution. The experience with the FIPSE project makes this choice appear particularly promising.